



Transformation in **Basic Combat Training**



Making Soldiers *Army Strong*

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The Soldier is tired, dirty and restless. He's been in the forward operating base (FOB) for a while now and is anxious to go out on a mission and get "in the game." At the same time, he's nervous—he's never done this before.

He and the rest of his platoon ready themselves for the unexpected. They check and double-check their gear. They put on their elbow and kneepads, interceptor body armor (IBA) with small-arms protective inserts (SAPI) and eye protection and get on the trucks at the platoon sergeant's command. They receive their ammunition and place their weapons into a weapons' status of ready-for-action.

The Soldier's heart races as he awaits directions and orders from his squad leader. Finally, he receives the order to engage as he makes enemy contact. He rotates his selector lever from safe to semi-automatic and fires as many rounds as he can on the enemy position. He keeps firing until he empties his magazine. He reloads and empties another magazine.

"Wow, what a rush," he thinks.

Suddenly, the truck comes to an abrupt halt after a huge explosion. The truck was hit by an improvised explosive device (IED). The platoon dismounts quickly in an orderly, precise fashion—just like it rehearsed many times before. The Soldier takes cover behind whatever they can find in the urban jungle. They fire magazine after magazine, repelling a relentless enemy.

By the end of the day, every Soldier is exhausted but has a renewed sense of confidence in himself, his equipment and his platoon. He is thankful for the training he had received; it just may have kept him and his battle buddies alive today.

This vignette could have occurred anywhere in Iraq or Afghanistan as our American Soldiers continue to engage and destroy the enemies of the US. In this case, the story described is a typical Soldier's experience in today's basic combat training during the Convoy Live-Fire Exercise at the Field Artillery Training Center (FATC), Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

This training event is one of 11 battle drills that Soldiers are required to perform. It helps develop Soldiers' into competent warriors with mental, emotional and physical strength that, along with shared Army values and teamwork, make them strong—*Army Strong*.

Warrior Training. During the past several years, Training and Doctrine

Command (TRADOC) leaders have made considerable improvements in providing and, more importantly, resourcing realistic and relevant training. To keep pace with the ever-evolving threats in our contemporary operating environment (COE), TRADOC has incorporated several essential tasks into its standard program of instruction (POI) based on feedback from combat veterans of Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Iraqi Freedom (OIF). These essential tasks are based on the premise that all Soldiers must be warriors first and technical experts second. From this premise, the warrior task and battle drills evolved.

"40 and 11" Training. This relevant and rigorous initial entry training (IET)

Basic Combat Training Soldiers patrol for "insurgents" during training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma's Freedom Town. (Photo by Fred W. Baker III)



Photo by Fred W. Baker III

Under the watchful eye of their drill sergeant, basic combat training Soldiers fire on targets along the live-fire convoy route at Fort Sill.

is comprised of 40 core warrior tasks and 11 battle drills, commonly referred to as the “40 and 11.” (See the figure on Page 26.)

The number of warrior tasks trained is not “set in stone,” and, hence, fluctuates as lessons are learned on the battlefield. These combat-focused tasks include detailed instructions on shooting, moving, communicating and warfighting—with special emphasis on operations in an urban environment.

Additionally, there are 11 essential battle drills to enhance training and produce Soldiers who are competent, confident and better prepared to enter into the ranks of an Army at war im-

mediately upon graduation from basic combat training. Soldiers spend more time than in previous years focusing on tasks that will help them survive in any combat situation.

For example, in basic rifle marksmanship (BRM), Soldiers now fire more than twice as many rounds as before. This training includes executing day and night reflexive fire with close combat optics during the Convoy Live-Fire Exercise, military operations in urban terrain (MOUT), security patrolling, room-clearing operations and checkpoint operations based out of a FOB.

Physical training (PT) is now a standardized program across all training

centers; exercises replicate movements made during combat operations and strengthen Soldiers accordingly.

The reality is that many Soldiers are assigned to units deploying to OIF and OEF within 90 days of departing IET. Therefore the training adaptation and refinement cannot start at the operational unit. The Army’s newest Soldiers must leave basic combat training prepared for combat operations and ready to accomplish their missions, regardless of their military occupational specialties (MOS).

So how does this happen? Who gets it done?

Drill Sergeants. Not since the 1970s has the Army had such a concentration of combat experience in the IET environment. Currently, of the 320 drill sergeants assigned to the FATC, 80 percent are recent combat veterans with a significant portion of those having been on multiple combat deployments in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), now called the War on Terrorism (WOT).

The average drill sergeant is roughly 28 years old, has some post-high school education and has been in the Army approximately 12.7 years. Most drill sergeants also are married and have at least one child. Many of them became drill sergeants immediately after returning from a combat tour, leaving little time for reintegration before beginning drill sergeant’s school.

Our drill sergeants’ combat experience is important to our newest Soldiers. The Soldiers receive firsthand, passionately told, realistic accounts of the war and learn how the training they receive may

Today's American Soldier

Today’s newest Army recruits come from all walks of life, but one thing can be said of all—they all know they enlisted during a time of war. The reasons for enlisting are varied just as they always have been. American Soldiers want to serve their country, make their parents proud and provide for their families. They want college tuition assistance, signing bonuses and job skills. They want discipline, and they want to accomplish something they’ll be proud of when they’re older. They want a bright future for themselves and their families.

The majority of Soldiers entering service today are part of the Millennium Generation that is defined as those born

from 1980 through 2000. These are Soldiers who entered the work force in the first decade of the millennium.

A recent Roper survey showed that millennial teenagers fault “selfishness” more than anything else as the major cause of problems in America. Nine out of 10 describe themselves as “happy, confident and positive.” Most are already cooperative team players. They like doing community service and working in groups.

Studies and characterizations of generations abound, but it’s widely accepted that Millennium Generation Americans were exposed to the following: they were raised during a period of heightened focus on improving the lives of children;

save their lives or a buddy's life.

The drill sergeants speak candidly with their Soldiers about the impact deployments have had on their families and careers. Drill sergeants take the time to tell Soldiers about operations that are similar to the training the Soldiers are receiving or how they wish that they had had similar training before combat. This allows the Soldiers to grasp the importance of the training.

Continually reinforced are concepts like "IBA and SAPI can save your life... they did mine" and "I saw a buddy saved because we applied first aid immediately after he was wounded." These reinforcing comments are integral to the training and of the utmost importance in keeping the Soldiers engaged and making them more survivable on future battlefields because of their training.

One constant lesson taught is that Soldiers are expected to be relentless and aggressive while waging war yet compassionate and understanding when nation building. These complementary personality traits are what Soldiers find in their drill sergeants.

So, how do drill sergeants lead these new Soldiers? They lead from the front.

"Soldierization"—Leading from the Front. The art of transforming civilians into Soldiers who meet the Army standards in only nine weeks is still a major undertaking and presents many unique challenges for drill sergeants. The process starts with getting to know each Soldier, his motivation for serving and who he really is.

Civilians enter basic training knowing they will go to war. They have an avid

desire to be trained and prepared properly to defend this nation. Civilians who join the Army deserve to be transitioned to Soldiers in the most professional manner possible.

Respect for a Soldier is now "front-loaded" by honoring the critical moral choice they have made. The training the Soldiers receive focuses more on developing them with the baseline they have instead of the antiquated ethos of "breaking them down" only to rebuild them.

The Army now focuses heavily on the seven Army values and the importance of embedding them into everything the Soldier does. These values are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity and personal courage. How a Soldier acts and performs during each training event can be related to these values—a critical part of the success of the soldierization process. Soldiers don't graduate from basic combat training until they show they can live by these values.

Today's drill sergeants have a different perspective on the process of training Soldiers than those of the past. The drill sergeants' professional, positive and inspirational leadership fosters a better overall training environment that provides superior results. This in comparison to an ego and power-driven training climate that promotes ridicule, unprofessional acts and language, and general disrespect of Soldiers.

Soldiers have the desire and ability to learn more effectively and faster when the environment is one in which they are lead, not pushed and harassed. Of course, all Soldiers require discipline, and the ability to instill that discipline

has not been taken away from the drill sergeant. But in the process, Soldiers are treated with dignity and respect. By following these basic criteria, the result is a more motivated, team-oriented, mission-focused Soldier who respects himself and his leadership.

Major General John M. Schofield spoke at an address to the US Corps of Cadets at the US Military Academy at West Point in 1879 and gave his own definition of discipline. He stated, "The discipline which makes the Soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army."

This statement has never been truer than today when it comes to training new Soldiers for war. Soldiers must be instilled with pride in and a sense of dignity and respect for themselves and others—as modeled for them by strong leaders. The result is that each Soldier has a feeling of worth and importance to the Army from day one.

Lieutenant General Robert L. Van Antwerp, the Commander of Accessions Command, instituted an acronym called "AURA" to explain how he wanted IET Soldiers treated. AURA stands for Acceptance, Understanding, Respect and Appreciation. As Soldiers see these attributes of good leadership in basic combat training and begin to adopt them, they will be more content with the Army as their chosen profession—this kind of leadership provides a reason for them to continue to serve our nation in a time of war.

Soldiers want to be accepted and have a desire to be a part of something larger

they were involved in more camps, lessons and after-school programs than any previous generation; they have had more interracial interaction than any previous generation; they witnessed the bombing of the Oklahoma City Murrah Federal Building; they saw two Columbine High School students murder their classmates; and they lived through September 11, 2001.

The generation of young Americans entering the military today has seen that America still has heroes. They've seen that one doesn't have to be a celebrity to be a hero. They've seen the media and their own communities pour praise on Soldiers, policemen and firefighters. Many realize they can be heroes by enlist-

ing in the Army. (The source of information about the Millennium Generation in this paragraph is from Claire Raines' 2003 book *Connecting Generations: The Sourcebook for a New Workplace*, printed by Crisp Publications, Berkeley, California.)

In an interview with *Time* magazine, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said that when today's recruit arrives at basic training, "they have purple hair and an earring, and they've never walked in step with another person in their lives. And suddenly, they get this training and in a matter of weeks, they become part of a unit—a team.

"They're all sizes and shapes, and

they're different ages, and they're different races, and you cannot help when you work with them but come away feeling that it is really a special thing that this country has." (The quote was taken from Nancy Gibbs' article "Person of the Year, 2003: The American Soldier" in the 29 December 2003 *Time*, Volume 162, Number 26. The quote was retrieved online on 7 September 2006 from <http://www.time.com/time/>.)

The modern day recruit comes from a multitude of backgrounds and has any number of motivations for being there. But when basic combat training is complete, he or she must be able to perform in combat.

40 Warrior Tasks

Shoot

- Qualify with assigned weapon.
- Correct malfunctions with assigned weapon.
- Engage targets with an M240B machine gun.
- Engage targets with an M249 machine gun.
- Engage targets with an M2 cal .50 machine gun.
- Engage targets with an MK19 40-mm grenade machine gun.
- Correct malfunctions of an M240B machine gun.
- Correct malfunctions of an M249 machine gun.
- Correct malfunctions of an M2 cal .50 machine gun.
- Correct malfunctions of an MK19 40-mm grenade machine gun.
- Engage targets with weapon using a night-vision sight.
- Engage targets with weapon using an aiming light.
- Employ mines and hand grenades.

Communicate

- Perform voice communications situation report (SITREP)/spot report (SPOTREP).
- Perform voice communications (medical evacuation, or MEDEVAC).
- Use visual signaling techniques.

Urban Operations

- Perform movement techniques during an urban operation.
- Engage targets during an urban operation.
- Enter a building during an urban operation.

Move

- Determine location on the ground (terrain association/map/global positioning system, or GPS).
- Navigate from one point to another dismounted.
- Move over, through or around obstacles (except minefields).

Fight

- Move under direct fire.
- React to indirect fire (dismounted and mounted).
- React to direct fire (dismounted and mounted).
- React to an unexploded ordnance hazard.
- React to man-to-man contact (combatives).
- React to a chemical or biological attack/hazard.
- Decontaminate yourself and individual equipment using chemical decontamination kit.
- Maintain equipment.
- Evaluate a casualty.
- Perform combat life-saving for open wounds (abdominal, chest and head).
- Perform combat life-saving for bleeding extremities.
- Perform tactical combat casualty care.
- Perform field sanitation and preventative medicine field craft.
- Select a temporary fighting position.
- Determine escalation of force.
- Perform personnel recovery.
- Serve as a sensor (every Soldier as a sensor).
- Detect and defeat an improvised explosive device (IED).

11 Battle Drills

- React to contact (visual, IED and direct fire, including rocket-propelled grenade, or RPG).
- React to ambush (near and far).
- React to indirect fire.
- React to a chemical attack.
- Break contact.
- Dismount a vehicle.
- Evacuate a casualty (dismounted and mounted).
- Establish security at a halt.
- Conduct checkpoint entry operations.
- Conduct vehicle roll-over drill.
- Conduct Convoy Live-Fire Exercise/convoy operations.

than themselves. They want to be understood when something goes wrong in their lives. They want respect and have the right to be treated with respect. Appreciation constantly needs to be shown when Soldiers do something to better themselves, the unit and the Army.

Today's revised soldierization process is successful because of the professionalism that our adaptive drill sergeants display and the ability of leaders in the training base to create a climate that encourages the essential process whereby a civilian (and his family) decides to become a Soldier.

The FATC and other Army training centers are responsible for this soldierization process and growing IET graduates who are Army Strong.

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"40 and 11" Required for Soldiers' Initial Entry Training (IET)